

CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

Mayor's Office



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INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: All Employees
FROM: James R. Engler
DATE: June 11, 2021
SUBJECT: 9th Policy Statement re: COVID-19

Introduction

After a year and a half of sacrifice and hard work, we have seen significant improvements in both COVID-19 case counts and widespread availability of our most important weapons in fighting this pandemic, safe and effective COVID-19 vaccinations. Accordingly, we are modifying our policy statement to account for the significantly decreased threat from COVID-19. City employees should expect to return to any policies or procedures in effect pre-COVID, except as modified by this policy statement.

City Operations

Onsite/Offsite Work – Appointing Authorities may require onsite work, as long as onsite work is performed in accordance the City's Safe Return to Work Guidelines found under the HR Info & Policies section of the City's [Remote Work website](#). Appointing authorities may permit employees to work virtually subject to the guidelines set forth in the [Virtual Work Policy for City Employees](#). Departments should expect to work closely with safety coordinators and Risk Management to account for the effect future changes in safety guidelines may have on City operations.

Public Health Guidelines

Quarantine/Isolation – Employees should follow guidance provided by the Department of Public Health as to when quarantine/isolation is necessary. Guidance is available [HERE](#). Departments following healthcare worker or congregant setting guidance should follow specific guidance for

those situations. Appointing Authorities may inquire as to an employee's vaccination status when determining whether an employee must quarantine or isolate after exposure to a COVID positive individual. Where possible, employees on self-quarantine who are well enough to work may work from home for all or some of this time in accordance with the [Virtual Work Policy for City Employees](#).

At-Risk Employees – Employees requesting a reasonable accommodation due to COVID-19 should inform their Appointing Authority so that they may engage in the interactive process to determine what accommodation may be made for employees unable to perform the essential functions of their jobs due to COVID-19.

Leave Usage

General Leave Usage – Employees who are not present for work, including for non-workplace-based COVID-19 quarantines, must use approved leave such as vacation, compensatory time, sick leave, or approved unpaid leave. If leave is not approved, the employee will be marked AWOL.

Probationary Leave Usage – Employees may use vacation and sick leave for COVID-related issues during their probationary period.

Advanced Sick Leave – Employees, including probationary employees, after exhausting all accrued leave, may use up to 10 days of sick leave per calendar year in advance of earning such leave. Advanced sick leave may only be used when the employee is absent from duty to the employee's illness, or when the employee must be absent from duty to care for a dependent who lives in the employee's home and is ill.

Sick Leave Documentation – Physician's notes provided or signed electronically, including those provided subsequent to telemedicine visits, may be used to satisfy sick leave documentation requirements. Additionally, although onsite employees must follow approved departmental processes for ensuring that they are not at risk for transmitting the virus, screening questionnaire responses cannot be used as medical documentation to comply with sick leave policies.

The following documents noting that an employee must quarantine due to COVID-19 exposure may be used to satisfy leave documentation requirements for quarantine periods:

- a physician's certification;
- an official contact tracer notification;
- documentation from a Pandemic Coordinator, departmental safety professional or HR professional requiring quarantine due to potential workplace COVID-19 contact.

Please note that employees are strongly encouraged to continue using telemedicine to reduce risk of exposure to or transmission of COVID-19 in obtaining sick leave documentation.

Dependent Care Leave Usage – Employees may use sick leave to care for dependents due to COVID-related school or daycare closures as follows:

1. Employees previously eligible for FMLA+ may use up to ten weeks' sick leave;
2. Employees previously not eligible for FMLA+ may use up to twenty days' sick leave.

Accumulated leave may be used intermittently, including in combination with working from home with the appropriate departmental approvals.

Additionally, all employees may use up to twenty days' sick leave to care for a dependent who is either quarantined or isolated due to COVID-19 exposure/infection.

Dependent Care Leave Documentation – To request Dependent Care Leave Usage as described above, employees, should continue to complete the FFCRA Leave Request Form previously used for FMLA+ and submit it to their supervisor or HR manager. The form requires the employee attest the information provided is accurate and complete. Falsification of any information will lead to disciplinary action, which may include dismissal.

COVID Excused Time – Employees will only be granted COVID Excused Time if they are required to self-quarantine at the direction of a departmental safety officer or human resources professional due to close contact with an individual potentially infected with COVID-19 while at work.

Leave Time for Vaccinated Employees – Fully-vaccinated employees who provide proof of their vaccination status before December 31, 2021 may receive four hours' special compensatory time.

Emergency Updates

Emergency Messaging – We strongly encourage employees to opt-in to receiving emergency messages regarding any ongoing City issues by providing cell phone numbers if they want text message updates. Updates will also be provided by email, and, in some cases, by phone. We also recommend that all employees stay up to date on the status of COVID-19 both internally and in the City by visiting the City's site dedicated to the COVID-19 outbreak: phila.gov/COVID-19 and opting into text messages by texting COVIDPHL to 888-777.